

VILLOT: That will take months.

JOHN PAUL: I intend to meet with the committee as soon as possible. There are three thousand employees in Curia. Use whoever you need.

Sources: "What are the character and personality of John Paul? After the recommendation of the birth control commission had been rejected and it looked as though there would be an encyclical, Luciani sent the report of his own small commission to the pope, arguing that now was not the proper time for a decision and that any action should be delayed until more study had been undertaken – which was very wise advise. . . .

In both the above cases, his own personal opinions represented a change from the church's previous positions – certainly in birth control and probably divorce." Popes 1978, p. 171. Emphasis supplied.

"Regarding the issue of birth control, reliable reports indicate that during the early 1960s, Luciani, then Bishop of Vittorio Veneto, commissioned a detailed study of the use of artificial means of contraception. This study embodying the findings of doctors, sociologists and theologians, was supposedly forwarded to the Holy See by Cardinal Giovanni Urbani, then Patriarch of Venice . . . It advised Pope Paul to refrain from reasserting the traditional ban on contraceptives." The Papacy Today, p. 171. Emphasis supplied.

"There is one memo which Gianpaolo repeatedly reads . . . There are two typed sentences. The first states that at 3:42 p.m. on July 9, 1978 the world's population reached 4.4 billion. The second predicts that 73 million people will be born this year, most of them in the Third World." Pontiff, p. 214.

"When Lorenze returns he is startled to be told by Gianpaolo that he wants briefing papers on every Third World nation where there are Catholics. It would take months, says the secretary hesitantly. Gianpaolo nods. It could, but it mustn't." . . There are going to be some late nights at the Secretarial of State." Pontiff, p. 215.

"And the Vatican's three thousand employees were clamoring for new pay deals and pensions." Night, p. 18.

The fact that the Pope was willing to meet a US Committee on Population came from IGN. The quote of Pope John Paul underlined may have come from IGN, p. 159.

LC 46

JOHN PAUL: Certainly I am too small for great things. But I can repeat the truth and the call of the Gospel as I did when I was a priest in my little church at home. Men need that.

The quote of Pope John Paul underlined above was taken from the quote in IGN, p.185.

LC 49

JOHN PAUL: The Vatican press has changed my speech again. ‘We’ this, ‘we’ that; I never us ‘we’. This isn’t my speech. This is just official statements drafted by the Curia. They even have me celebrating the tenth anniversary of Paul’s encyclical against birth control.
Villot and Felici know I intend to reexamine the issue.

LORENZI: There is also an article condemning the birth of the recent test-tube baby.

JOHN PAUL: They know about the letter I wrote congratulating the baby.
(*Angry.*) Damn them.

Sources: “The Curia was bitter and tried to censor [Luciani’s] speeches, reinserting the majestic ‘we’ where he had used the simple familiar ‘I’. It ignored him, harassed him, tried to freeze him out . . .” Popes 1978 p. 163. See Popes 1978 (*supra*) p. 171 (disagreed with Church’s position on birth control)

“The official texts put out by the Vatican press office and *Osservatore Romano* ignored all [of Luciani’s] off-the-cuff remarks and restored the pontifical we. Already Romans began to talk about ‘the censored pope.’” Three Popes, p. 121.

See Three Popes, *supra* p. 112 discussing letter to the test tube baby; see also Popes 1978, p. 138.

"And his [John Paul I] speeches are being edited; all those enchanting 'I's' are being changed in L'Osservatore Romano to the deadening 'we'. The editors are also rationing the number of papal jokes and asides they will publish, and often ignore Gianpaolo's carefully rehearsed departures from his script." Pontiff, p. 248.

See letter to test tube baby at LC 37, found in Three Popes, p. 112; Popes 1978, p. 138.

"Instead of this informal talk, L'Osservatore Romano published only the official text, and complained that the pontiff's actual remarks had been pirated by a private station. In this and several other minor matters – for example, changing John Paul's use of 'I' to 'We' in reporting informal remarks – the newspaper seemed intent on exercising the traditional curial censorship over the pope's public utterances." The Papacy Today, p. 169.

The fact that there were two newspaper articles that angered Luciani may have come from IGN. The text underlined above was probably based on the text you have identified in IGN, p. 191-92.

LC 49, 50, 51

JOHN PAUL: Cardinal Gantin, it is a pleasure to see you. Did Benelli tell you why I wanted to meet?

GANTIN: Yes, to talk about running the Church's organization for international aid.

JOHN PAUL: Are you interested?

GANTIN: No.

JOHN PAUL: (*Surprised.*) Why not?

GANTIN: I will not be a party to a system that generates income through exploitation.

JOHN PAUL: (*Sofily rebuking.*) You are talking about our Church.

GANTIN: And the Church should use its resources to help people learn the skills necessary for economic independence, not for investment in

corporations whose purposes are incompatible with the teachings
of the Church.

JOHN PAUL: (*Beginning to smile.*) I am not asking you to manage the Church's assets. I am only asking you to take charge of international aid.

GANTIN: As long as Marcinkus runs the Vatican Bank and Villot the Treasury, nothing will change.

JOHN PAUL: Things will change. (*To GANTIN.*) But, in the meantime, I need your help.

BENELLI: And Marcinkus and...

JOHN PAUL: Marcinkus and Villot are my problem. (*To GANTIN.*) As a personal favour to me, I would like you to accept.

GANTIN: Your Holiness... I accept.

JOHN PAUL: (*Smiling.*) Good. This afternoon I will tell Cardinal Villot that you are taking over his responsibilities for international aid.

Sources: "Exactly at nine thirty Martin ushers in Bernardin Gantin ... Gianpaolo [John Paul I] comes quickly to point. He outlines what he has learned and what he wants to do.

Gantin is frank – and will later make no secret of it. Paul, possibly partly because of his own financial experience, had, in the closing years of his life, developed an entrenched fear of the Italian left. This ... had decided him to move the Vatican's money beyond the reach of those in Italy he felt might one day grab it... Equally, if the church is to continue to be seen as the church of the poor, especially in the Third World, it must ensure that it does not appear blatantly materialistic and divert some of its still-considerable financial resources to more humane causes. Gantin urges that the Vatican use its investments whenever possible to help stop socioeconomic injustices and exploration. Vatican finances should be used to support worthwhile redevelopment schemes in Africa, Asia and South America. There could still be profits – and said policy might also virtually put an end to the growing criticism from Catholics and non Catholics about how the pope's financial empire functions.

For the first time Gianpaolo smiles. There are going to be changes. For a start he wants Gantin to take charge of Cor Unam, the Church's powerful organization for international aid. Until now, this important and delicate post belonged to Villot.,

Gantin – Accepts.” Pontiff, PP. 234-235, emphasis supplied.

LC 51, 52

BENELLI: Do you have Villot's report on the bank?

JOHN PAUL: No. The report is important. But more important is the man.

(*MARCINKUS enters.*)

MARCINKUS: Your Holiness, thank you for seeing me. (*To BENELLI.*) How is Florence?

BENELLI: Beautiful. But is always a pleasure to visit Rome.

MARCINKUS: I'm sure your diocese misses you.

JOHN PAUL: Why don't you sit down, Bishop. (*They all sit.*) Would you like some coffee?

MARCINKUS: No, thank you.

JOHN PAUL: I understand you are from Cicero, Illinois.

MARCINKUS: (*Glancing first at BENELLI.*) Yes.

JOHN PAUL: That's near Chicago.

MARCINKUS: Yes.

JOHN PAUL: How long have you been in Rome?

MARCINKUS: Almost twenty years.

JOHN PAUL: You must miss Chicago. Do you still have family there?

MARCINKUS: A few relatives...I try to visit them whenever I can.

JOHN PAUL: It is unfortunate that the Church has kept you away from home for so long.

MARCINKUS: It is in the service of God.

JOHN PAUL: What do you do at the bank?

MARCINKUS: (*Pause.*) I set policy.

JOHN PAUL: What is the policy?

MARCINKUS: The policy (*he shrugs and smiles.*) is to make money.

BENELLI: Is that why you sold the Catholic Bank of Venice for less than it was worth?

MARCINKUS: We...the Church received other favours in exchange. If you simply invest with a bank...

BENELLI: (*Interrupting.*) Banco Ambrosiano.

MARCINKUS: For instance, Ambrosiano; if you simply invest, you receive one interest rate, a low interest rate. But if you know people at the bank they will tell you if they have a particular project, they will give you a higher rate.

JOHN PAUL: But, what about the nature of the project?

MARCINKUS: I don't ask.

BENELLI: Don't you think the Church should be concerned about the nature of its investments?

JOHN PAUL: This is the house of God, not the house of Rothschild.

MARCINKUS: You can't run the Church on Hail Marys, Your Holiness.

JOHN PAUL looks at MARCINKUS for a moment.

JOHN PAUL: I can try. (*He stands up.*) It has been a pleasure meeting you, Bishop. Your comments should help me understand the audit.

MARCINKUS: (*Standing.*) The audit?

BENELLI: His Holiness has asked Villot to conduct an audit of the Bank.

JOHN PAUL: (*Putting his arm around MARCINKUS and walking him to the door.*) Thank you again, Bishop. It has been a pleasure. (*JOHN PAUL stops and holds out his ring. As MARCINKUS kisses it.*)

Hopefully we will be able to get you home soon.

MARCINKUS looks at BENELLI and leaves.

Sources: “John Paul made remarkable progress in understanding and beginning to control the recalcitrant bureaucracy. He began an investigation of Vatican finances a subject on which he already had strong feelings.” Popes 1978 pp. 163-164

“You read these books about me [Marcinkus] and you get the impression I was raised by Al Capone in the streets. That’s because of Cicero, see.” Night, p. 81. Emphasis supplied.

“if I [Marcinkus] put a deposit in the bank, the banker may say ‘you know we have this particular project: if you give that money and I earmark it for that project and we’ll get you a higher percentage? And I say, well that’s your business. I don’t want to know what you are doing.” Night, p. 131. Emphasis supplied.

“When my workers here come to retire they expect a pension; its no use saying to them ‘I’ll pay you four hundred Hail Marys, now that’s been misquoted all over the place . . . I’m quoted as saying “You can’t run the Church on Hail Marys.”” Night, p. 76. Emphasis supplied.

“Even before September 6, when Il Mondo . . . published a detailed exposé of the Vatican’s financial morass almost confirming what Gianpaolo had learned from Benelli and Felice; he had already begun to untangle the machinations of Marcinkus, who had been firmly asked for an accounting.” Pontiff, p. 243. Emphasis supplied.

“But when I [Marcinkus] saw Pope Luciani that time after he became pope... I went up there for a meeting... He thanked me for giving him all the information... He was most gracious.” Night, P. 138.

"Next thing, Luciani becomes Pope – and Marcinkus is frightened that he is going to be sacked." Night, p. 208.

"one of the files is a slim, buff-colored folder containing his handwritten notes of everything Felici and Benelli have told him about the financial operation of the Vatican..."

First they detailed the tangled financial dealings which have bound the IOR – Vatican Bank – to Sindona even after the Sicilians financial empire collapsed in 1974 in New York...to avoid being extradited back to Italy... he is dropping dark hints that if he is returned, he will detail precisely how far Marcinkus was aware of and condoned his own crooked dealings.

Felice and Benelli fear Marcinkus might have known more than he ever admitted...

Now... another scandal is brewing. Potentially, even more dangerous than Sindona for the Vatican – for its financial credibility and moral authority – is the astonishing way Marcinkus has blithely allowed the Vatican to become entangled with Roberto Calvi." Pontiff pp. 231-232. Emphasis supplied. See also pages 233-234.

The reference to the House of Rothschild was an original idea of Mr. Crane's.

LC 56, 57

The POPE moves down stage. He encounters a gardener on his knees working.

THOMAS. Your Holiness...

JOHN PAUL: It is a beautiful garden. It reminds me of my old garden in the Dolomites.

THOMAS: Thank you, Your Holiness. (*He stands up and takes his hat off.*)

JOHN PAUL: What is your name?

THOMAS: Thomas.

JOHN PAUL: What does religion mean to you, Thomas?

THOMAS: Mass on Sundays.

JOHN PAUL: Anything else?

THOMAS: Things I can't do.

JOHN PAUL: (*JOHN PAUL crouches down.*) These flowers, Thomas, you take care of them.

THOMAS: (*Crouching down too.*) Yes, Holy Father.

JOHN PAUL: You water them, pull out the weeds, spray for insects.

THOMAS: Of course.

JOHN PAUL: Do you think they know it? (*Pause.*) God cares for you whether you know it or not. (*JOHN PAUL stands and gestures with his hand.*) What do you think of all this...the Vatican?

THOMAS: (*Stands and looks around.*) A palace your Holiness.

JOHN PAUL: A palace?

THOMAS: (*No uncertain.*) A palace...for the Pope...for you to live in.

JOHN PAUL: (*Looking around.*) It does look like a palace...but it is a church.

THOMAS: It has guards Your Holiness, a church doesn't have guards.

JOHN PAUL: You are right... Do you think this where the Pope should live?

(*Silence.*) Where should the Bishop of Rome live?

THOMAS: (*Confused.*) ...With his people.

JOHN PAUL: Yes, with his people. (*VILLOT and FELICI enter. JOHN PAUL sees them.*) Thank you Thomas.

This text is clearly original to LC. The source was Mr. Crane's general experience, particularly his visit to the Vatican in 1967 and his horror at the opulence of the Vatican, the home of the head of the Roman Catholic church.

See also:

"Citan says one of his guards is trailing the pope through the Vatican gardens... They find Gianpaolo talking animatedly to one of the gardeners. The pope waives cheerfully as the trio bears down on him. The gardener backs away. In all his years of Vatican

service, he has never encountered such a distinguished gathering at such an early hour.” Pontiff. P. 230.

“The way [John Paul I] canvasses the widest possible opinions on almost every matter: lowly members of the curia who never spoke to Paul suddenly find themselves encountering Gianpaolo during one of his prowls through the apostole Palace and having their views on a subject earnestly sought.” Pontiff, P. 226.

LC 58, 59

VILLOT: You shouldn’t talk to people like that.

JOHN PAUL looks inquisitively at Villot. (Defensively.) Popes don’t speak to gardeners.

JOHN PAUL: My father was a bricklayer. (*Pause as VILLOT digests this unpleasant fact.*) It is time for me to visit Rome. I want to see every section, on foot.

VILLOT: Impossible.

JOHN PAUL: That word again.

FELICI: Thousands of people would flock to see you. The city would come to a halt.

JOHN PAUL: (*Thinking.*) Rome has hospitals?

VILLOT: Of course.

JOHN PAUL: It is the duty of a pastor to visit the sick and, as Bishop of Rome, to visit my churches. You will organise visits to every hospital, every church, every orphanage... (*VILLOT starts to speak.*) And do not tell me it is impossible.

Sources: “His father [Luciani’s] was a bricklayer . . .” Inside The Vatican, p. 68.

"Where he [John Paul I's father] took seasonal jobs as a bricklayer or electrician." Three Popes, P. 89.

"He told the Vatican officials that he wished to visit every hospital, church and refugee center in Rome . . ." IGN, p. 183.

LC 59, 60

JOHN PAUL: (*Starts to leave and then stops.*) And another thing: the article in the Vatican press about birth control.

VILLOT: An excellent article.

JOHN PAUL: People who read the article will assume that the opinions in it are mine.

FELICI: The opinions in the article are consistent with the position of the Church.

JOHN PAUL: (*Becoming angry.*) They are not consistent with my position and you know it... (*Calmer.*) Before Paul's encyclical I submitted a report recommending that some form of artificial birth control be permitted in marriage. Last week the Vatican press denied my report ever existed.

VILLOT: We have located every copy. They are now locked in the Vatican archives.

JOHN PAUL: That denial was a lie.

FELICI: It is the function of the Curia to protect a Pope from possible mistakes that he made earlier in his life.

JOHN PAUL: I will decide if there were mistakes, not the Curia. I did not want to become Pope. The Cardinals in their infinite wisdom elected me, and I foolishly accepted. But now I am the Pope.

VILLOT: No Pope can function without the assistance of the Curia.

JOHN PAUL: (*Coldly.*) It appears that no Pope can function with its assistance. It is the function of the Pope to set policy, to govern, not the Curia and not the Vatican press.

VILLOT: The press was merely following the policy set out by Pope Paul.

JOHN PAUL: By attacking a newborn baby, a baby I had just congratulated in a letter. (*Furious.*) My church will not make war on babies.

FELICI: The article condemned artificial conception, not the child.

JOHN PAUL: The article condemned both. (*Pause. Calmly and icily.*) Cardinal Felici, last week you told me that the Curia wanted me to restrain what it called my ‘natural exuberance’.

FELICI: It was merely a suggestion, Your Holiness.

JOHN PAUL: I want you to return the compliment on my behalf. Tell that little newspaper to restrain its views. Editors are not indispensable.
(*Turns and exits.*)

VILLOT: I will bury him in enough paper and reports to keep him busy twenty-four hours a day. He won't have time to do anything else.

FELICI: He will find the time.

VILLOT: He will destroy everything Pope Paul did.

FELICI: He will destroy the Church.

VILLOT: We made him Pope.

FELICI: Benelli made him Pope.

VILLOT: As long as he is Pope we have to obey.

FELICI: Popes are like editors, neither is indispensable.

Sources: "After the recommendation of the birth control commission had been rejected and it looked as though there could be an encyclical Luciani sent the report of his own small commission to the pope, arguing that now was not the proper time for a decision and that any action should be delayed until more study had been undertaken – which was very wise advice..."

In both the above cases, his own personal opinion represented a change from the churches previous positions – certainly in birth control and probably divorce." Popes 1978, P. 171; see also The Papacy Today, p. 171.

"Father Henri de Riedmatten, the dominican priest who was secretary of Pope Pauls' ad hoc commission on the issue, categorically denied that such a document [Luciani's report on birth control] ever existed." The Papacy Today, p. 171.

"To the cardinals of the curia, he [Luciani] made it clear that their function was to administer. He not they would govern and determine church policy and its implementation." The Papacy Today, p. 167.

The quote of Pope John Paul underlined above was taken from IGN p. 192.

LC 62

BENELLI: He called me in Florence. His voice was quiet, calm. I could feel his resolve.

CONFESSOR: What did he say?

BENELLI: (*Smiling.*) That the truth is as hard to find in the Vatican as a good cup of coffee. He asked me to come back to Rome, to come back as Secretary of State. He was going to remove them all, Villot, Marcinkus, Baggio. He said it was to send people home.

Sources: "He [John Paul I] was certainly a fiendish coffee drinker all day long as far as I can tell." Night P. 308.

Ergo the constant mention of coffee in the play punctuated by the line "the truth is as hard to find in the Vatican as a good cup of coffee"

"Apparently he tried to persuade someone to accept the diocese of Venice as his replacement and was rudely rejected. The Curia was freezing him out. He huddled with Cardinal Baggio about some critical appointments and replacements in the world hierarchy." Popes 1978, P. 172

"Now the rest is based on excellent sources inside the Vatican, I know for a fact that certain things happened the evening Pope Luciani died. He had it in mind to change things at the top of the Curia and make certain new appointments. He wanted to substitute Cardinal Villot with Cardinal Benelli. Cosaroli would have gone to Milan, taking Cardinal Colombo's place. This sort of thing. Papa Luciani talked with Villot about these plans on the last evening of his life and received a very straight reply. Villot told him it, would be a tremendous change from Paul VI's policies . . .") Night, p. 310.

"Villot enters the Pope's study and they talk for one hour and fifteen minutes. Various Vatican sources will later claim that the interview was acrimonious, charged with emotion." Night, P. 319

"Another widely disseminated pious lie was that the pope [John Paul I] had been holding in his hand the rough draft of a homily he was preparing. But soon enough, word got out that the pope had been involved in a harsh discussion with his secretary of state [Cardinal Villot] about forthcoming personnel changes in the curia and the Italian Church and that on the night of his death, he had phoned Cardinal Giovanni Colombo, archbishop of Milan to ask his advice.

This lead some monsignors in the Curia to whisper that the sheet of papers found in Lucianis' hand dealt with appointments and transfers – notes for reshaping the balance of power within he church. Pope John Paul I's notes were never published. In keeping with the usual practice, Secretary of State Villot ordered the removal of every personal item belonging to the Pontiff, including his glasses, his slippers, and above all the medicines on his night table." His Holiness, pp. 151-52, emphasis supplied.

"He quickly demonstrated, too – which may explain much of the opposition – that the Curia held no fear for him. He would build from where Paul had left off, internationalizing the Curia still more. He planned to introduce foreigners in increasing numbers into middle management posts; eventually there might even be non-Italian nuncios. And he wanted younger people in the Curia; the age of his civil servants was currently 60.2 years." Pontiff, p. 244

The fact that John Paul was considering removing Baggio may have come from IGN.

Act Two

LC 64

VINCENZA: Did you remember to take you pill last night.

JOHN PAUL: Yes, Sister.

VINCENZA: The doctor says it will give you more energy.

JOHN PAUL: It will not make these papers disappear any faster.

VINCENZA: Would you like another of coffee?

JOHN PAUL: Thank you, the coffee is much better this morning.

VINCENZA: I bought a proper coffee-maker yesterday.

JOHN PAUL: (Smiling) Perhaps the Vatican can change

. . . . VINCENZA (Looking at tray on desk)

You ate all your sweets last night.

JOHN PAUL: (Guilty) Yes, Sister.

Sources: "Shortly before eight o'clock this Sunday evening, a vigorous woman with a strong face uncorks a glass jar of boiled sweets in the kitchen of the Papal apartment and begins carefully to select an assortment which she arranges in a cut-glass bowl. This is Sister Vincenza, Gianpaolo's housekeeper and confidante,"

"As she marches out of the kitchen carrying the bowl of sweets on a silver tray, she can see everywhere evidence of the changes she has so far introduced."

"Having filled the bowl, she recaps the jar and places it back on the shelf. Nobody else, Vincenza has ruled, is to touch its contents. Apart from the sweets on the shelf, there are other little delicacies the pope likes: a variety of nuts, tins of his favorite coffee, a pot holding brown sugar. . . ."

"She places the bowl of sweets beside the short stack of books on the bedside table. For as long as she can remember the man she must now call *Santissimo Padre*—at least in front of others—likes to suck boiled sweets while he reads before going to sleep. Every evening at this hour she places a fresh bowl by his beside. . . ."

"Twice in the past week he has called her to his bedroom, asking her to bring a bowl of hot water and the bottle of herbal elixir they both feel is so beneficial for his phlebitic condition." Pontiff, pp. 220-223.

"... Secretary of State Villot ordered the removal of every personal item belonging to the pontiff, including his glasses, his slippers and above all the medicines on his night table. His Holiness, pp. 151-152.

BAGGIO: (Uncertain) Yes.

JOHN PAUL: The people of Venice are very dear to me. They need a cardinal to nourish and care for them. I want you to be the Cardinal.

BAGGIO: (Shocked) Me.

JOHN PAUL: Yes.

BAGGIO: But there is so much that I still have to do in Rome. . . my work . . . the bishops throughout the world. . .

JOHN PAUL: I want you to take care of Venice.

BAGGIO: (getting upset) You can't mean it.

JOHN PAUL: I do.

BAGGIO: (Calmer) Thank you but I must decline.

JOHN PAUL: You decline?

BAGGIO: I am needed here in Rome.

JOHN PAUL: I think it is my job to decide where my cardinals are needed. I want you to go to Venice.

BAGGIO: No.

JOHN PAUL: Cardinal Baggio, the matter is not open to debate.

BAGGIO: I am not leaving Rome.

JOHN PAUL: (Pause) And your oath of obedience?

BAGGIO: I am a cardinal a prince of the church.

JOHN PAUL: I am the Pope.

BAGGIO: Your Holiness has much to learn.

JOHN PAUL: I am learning. I am not asking you to go to Venice, it is an order.

BAGGIO: (Losing his temper) Not for me.

JOHN PAUL: (Calm) You would defy the Pope?

BAGGIO: It takes more than new robes to make a Pope. It takes more than patting children on the head and telling funny stories. Thirty days ago you were a nobody in a backwater diocese preaching to empty churches and now you think you can rule the Roman Catholic church. I am staying in Rome.

JOHN PAUL: Maybe I am not much of a Pope, but you are going to Venice.

BAGGIO: (Yelling) I'd sooner go to hell (LORENZI enters the room)

JOHN PAUL: (softly) That can be arranged.

Sources: “Apparently he tried to persuade someone to accept the diocese of Venice as his replacement and was rudely rejected. The Curia was freezing him out. He huddled with Baggio above some critical appointments and replacements in the world hierarchy.” Popes 1978, p. 172.

“. . . inside the Vatican there is no such thing as masonry. I swear it. I have no doubts in my whole mind about it. They said Baggio was one . . .” Night, p. 144.

“He was less pleased with the next decision at which Luciani had arrived. Venice was without a Patriarch. Baggio was offered the job . . .”

“The meeting between Baggio and Luciani has been described to me as ‘a violent argument with the violence and anger entirely deriving from His Eminence. The Holy Father remained calm.’ IGN, pp. 194, 195.

LC 69, 70, 71

VILLOT: Thank you, yes (JOHN PAUL pours each of them a cup) Cardinal Baggio looked upset.

JOHN PAUL: Yes. Tell me, is it usual for a cardinal to refuse to obey a Pope?

VILLOT: I don't understand.

JOHN PAUL: I just told Cardinal Baggio that I wanted him to replace me in Venice. He said no.

VILLOT: he said no?!

JOHN PAUL: Yes.

VILLOT: You agreed to reconsider?

JOHN PAUL: I want you to arrange for Cardinal Baggio's transfer.

VILLOT: If your Holiness insists.

JOHN PAUL: I do. Please remind him that I did not want to come to Rome. Sometimes we have to sacrifice for the good of the Church.

VILLOT: I do not believe that Cardinal Baggio considers becoming Pope a sacrifice, but I will remind him.

JOHN PAUL: I've read your report on the Vatican Bank. I've also read Cardinal Benelli's report.

VILLOT: Benelli submitted a report?

JOHN PAUL: I have decided to remove Bishop Marcinkus.

VILLOT: When?

JOHN PAUL: Tomorrow.

VILLOT: Do you have another job for him in the Vatican?

JOHN PAUL: No, he is to be transferred to Chicago.

VILLOT: As your Holiness wishes. (Pause)

JOHN PAUL: How long have you been Secretary of State?

VILLOT: Ten years.

JOHN PAUL: It is a demanding job.

VILLOT: I have done my best.

JOHN PAUL: I know. You have earned the right to rest.

VILLOT: (Pause) does Your Holiness want me to retire?

JOHN PAUL: Yes.

VILLOT: (There is a long pause) Cardinal Casaroli is a good man.

JOHN PAUL: A brilliant diplomat . . . but he is too willing to compromise with the communists.

VILLOT: Who is to be my replacement?

JOHN PAUL: Cardinal Benelli. (There is a long pause)

VILLOT: You are the Pope.

JOHN PAUL: What do you think?

VILLOT: Your way is not Pope Paul's way.

JOHN PAUL: (Wearily) I am not Pope Paul.

VILLOT: I fear for the Church.

JOHN PAUL: Why?

VILLOT: Because you are wrong.

JOHN PAUL: How am I wrong.

VILLOT: Everything about you is wrong.

JOHN PAUL: I am what I am (Pause)

Sources: “Now the rest is based on excellent sources inside the Vatican. I know for a fact that certain things happened the evening Popa Luciani died. He had it in mind to change things at the top of the Curia and make certain appointments. He wanted to substitute Cardinal Villot with Cardinal Benelli. Casaroli would have gone to Milan, taking Cardinal Colombo’s place. This sort of thing. Popa Luciani talked with Villot about these plans on the last evening of his life and received a very straight reply. Villot told him it would be a tremendous change from Paul VI’s policies . . . The Pope was shocked to receive such a forceful and opposing point of view. Anyway he called Cardinal Colombo, who gave him the same answer, which only made him more worried and anxious.” Pontiff, pp. 310-311. Emphasis supplied.

“Tell him that we all have to sacrifice at times. Perhaps you should remind him that I had no desire for this job.” IGN quoting John Paul I.

“Listen, there’s a fact which is beyond dispute as far as I am concerned. That Pope [John Paul I] won enormous popular affection from ordinary people. He was being thought, more humble, more modest, more simple. His death appeared so inexplicable that the only possible explanation seemed he had been poisoned. This idea would have been readily accepted by this people.”

I can tell you something and this isn’t just hot air: these’s a serious background to it. Good man that he was, there were rumors that John Paul I was going to clean up the Vatican. It was being rumored that he was going to fire Marcinkus and have him removed. Why?

Behind all this there’s a true story. A couple of years before Luciani became Pope, the Banca Ambrosiano was trying to take over the Banca Cattolica of the Veneto. It was funded by the Catholic associations in which the Church had great interest. At a certain point it was transferred to Banca Ambrosiano by Marcinkus. Luciani came to Rome a patriarch of Venice to discuss the matter with Paul VI, but he was sent to Marcinkus to see what could be done to stop it. Marcinkus saw him and told him, quite crudely, that the patriarch of Venice should be concerned with his people and not with banking.” Night, pp. 207-208.

“Villot asks Gianpaolo—in the unbending voice that makes him so frosty—whether the pope has yet made up his mind about two key appointments. The first is who will fill the empty seat of patriarch of Venice.” Pontiff, p. 255. Emphasis supplied.

“Luciani advised Villot that Marcinkus was to be removed immediately . . . A suitable post in Chicago would be found for him . . .” IGN, p. 197.

"Villot said 'I thought you were considering Casaroli as my replacement?' I did for a considerable time. I think much of his work is brilliant but I share Giovanni Benelli's reservations about some of the policy initiatives that have been made in the recent past in Europe . . ."

"'You are the Pope. You are free to decide.' 'Yes, yes but what do you think?' Villot shrugged. 'These decisions will please some and distress others. There are cardinals within this Roman Curia who worked hard to get you elected who will feel betrayed. They will consider there appointments contrary to the late Holy Father's wishes.' 'Luciani smiled.' Was the late Holy Father planning to make appointments in perpetuity?" IGN, p. 199.

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.... BENELLI. Villot called me the next morning, his voice was flat without emotion.

He read me the statement he was giving to Vatican Radio. "At five thirty in the morning of September the twenty-ninth, nineteen seventy eight, Monsignor Magee found the Pope dead in his bed. He was sitting up with the light on reading "The Imitation of Christ".

Death was due to a heart attack." (No longer quoting from the broadcast) He died on the thirty-third day of his reign. He was the first Pope in a century to die alone.

Sources: See also "Father Romeo Panciroli clears with Villot the official announcement of Gianpaolo's death." This morning at about 5:30 am, the private secretary of the pope, Father Magee entered the room of Pope John Paul I. Not having him in his chapel as usual, he was looking for him in his room and found him dead in bed with the lights on as if he was reading." Pontiff, p. 268.

"Father Romeo Panciroli clears with Villot the official announcement of Gianpaolo's death. This morning at about 5:30 A.M., the private secretary of the pope, Father John Magee, entered the bedroom of Pope John Paul I. Not having found him in his chapel as usual, he was looking for him in his room and found him dead in bed with the lights on as if he were reading." Pontiff, p. 268.

"At seven, forty-two A.M. Vatican Radio made the announcement of the pope's death, but it also lied. To reveal that Sister Vincenzina had seen even a dead pope in his pajamas was unthinkable. Thus in the official version Monsignor John Magee, the pope's Irish secretary, discovered the body. Cardinal Jean Villot, the Vatican secretary of state, had issued strict instructions. 'The world cannot be told that a woman was the first person to enter the pontiff's bedroom.' Another widely disseminated pious lie was that the pope had been reading. The Imitation of Christ by the fifteenth - century mystic

Thomas à Kempis when he was stricken." His Holiness, p. 151. Also quoted in the newspapers.

"Albino Luciani was the first Pope to die alone for over one hundred years, but it was a great deal longer since a Pope was murdered." IGN, p. 202.

VICENZA: May I see him?

BENELLI nods and turns away from the door. She goes to the door of JOHN PAUL's bedroom.

He looked so peaceful when I found him.

BENELLI: (Curious) You found him?

VICENZA: (Emotional) He was sitting up in bed, his glasses were still on, he head was slightly to one side, his papers were in his lap.

BENELLI: His papers?

VICENZA: Lists of names. He told me he was sending people home.

BENELLI: Villot said he was reading 'Imitation of the Life of Christ'.

VICENZA: No, he had his papers.

BENELLI: (Looking around) Where are his things?

VICENZA: Cardinal Villot had everything taken away... everything except his books

BENELLI: Sister, did the Pope complain about any physical problem yesterday . . . chest pains, shortness of breath?

VICENZA: No.

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VILLOT: It is now our responsibility to schedule the funeral and prepare for the conclave. We must . . .

Sources: "Shortly before four-thirty, dressed in her habit and lace-up black shoes, carrying a tray holding a flask of coffee, a cup and saucer, a bowl of sugar and a jug of cream. Vincenza walks to the pope's bedroom door and leaves the tray on a small table beside it. She returns to the kitchen where some of the other nuns are beginning to prepare breakfast."

"A little before five o'clock, Vincenza goes to collect the tray. She is surprised to find it has not been touched."

"She hesitates. Should she remove the tray? Or leave it here? This has never happened in all the years she has brought him the first coffee of the day."

"Vincenza leans toward the door, listening for sound. She thinks perhaps the pope has overslept and is now too busy to take coffee. But then she reminds herself she cannot recall him ever once oversleeping."

"There is no sound from the bedroom."

"The nun glances over her shoulder. There is nobody in sight to tell her what to do now. She looks back at the door. Once more she listens, finally pressing her ear to the door. There is still no sound from beyond."

"Vincenza gently knocks. There is no response."

"She does so again, harder. She feels certain someone, *somewhere*, will have heard her and must appear shortly. She hopes it may be Magee or Lorenzo they will know what to do."

"Nobody comes."

"A new thought enters her head. If the pope doesn't want to pen door he could at least call out. Maybe he hasn't heard. She knows more insistently."

"There is no reply."

"She hesitates, increasingly confused."

"Vincenza looks at the door handle and the keyhole beside it. Suddenly, her mind made up, she kneels, putting her eye to the keyhole, squinting to better see into the bedroom. The light is on. She feel relieved. He must be awake. She moves her head. All she can make out is the foot of the bed and part of the carpet. She rises as another thought strikes her. What if somebody has seen her peeking through the keyhole? How could she explain her unease? And what would they think about what she intends to do now?"

"Quickly, before resolve weakens, Vincenza reaches for the handle and turns it slowly, opening the door a few inches so she can peer into the room."

"The nun stops, frozen."

"Gianpaolo is sitting up in bed and appears to be staring strangely at her. She can see he's been reading, and his glasses are way down his nose. His knees are drawn up and his is holding a file."

"Vincenza begins to ease shut the door. There is something terribly wrong. The pope's right hand is dangling oddly, the fingers half clenched.. And the file he's holding is empty, the paper scattered across the bed sheet and onto the floor. But it is the look on his face which most frightens Vincenza. His lips are drawn back, exposing gums, giving his mouth an alarming savage look. His eyes are bulging in their sockets, and the veins in his neck stand out."

"*"Santissimo Padre?"*" she asks fearfully."

"There is no response."

"*"Albino?"* She uses the name she sometimes used when they are alone."

"He continues to stare."

"Vincenza fully opens the door."

"His contorted fact doe not change. The tilt of his glasses magnifies one eye."

"She screams."

"The pope continues to stare sightlessly back at her."

"Vincenza turns and runs screaming down the hall." Pontiff. pp. 258-260. Emphasis supplied.

"Sister Vincenzina entered the pope's bedroom a little after five a.m. She pulled back the curtains from the bed and discovered a corpse. John Paul I was curled up on his right side, clutching a handful of papers, his fact stiffened into a half smile. Every morning at four-thirty the nun was accustomed to leaving a cup of coffee just outside the pope's bedroom door; when she saw that it hadn't been touched, she became alarmed. So she decided to go inside and check for herself. It was September 29, 1978. The life of the Apostolic Palace was thrown into utter disarray.

"At seven forty-two a.m. Vatican Radio made the announcement of the pope's death, but it also lied. To reveal that Sister Vincenzina had seen even a dead pope in his pajamas was unthinkable. Thus in the official version Monsignor John Magee, the pope's Irish secretary, discovered the body. Cardinal Jean Villot, the Vatican secretary of state, had issued strict instructions: "The world cannot be told that a woman was the first person to enter the pontiff's bedroom.

"Another widely disseminated pious lie was that the pope had been reading *The Imitation of Christ* by the fifteenth-century mystic Thomas à Kempis when he was stricken. Later Vatican authorities would say that John Paul I had been holding in his hand the rough draft of a homily he was preparing. But soon enough, word got out that the pope had been involved in a harsh discussion with his secretary of state about forthcoming personnel changes in the Curia and the Italian Church and that on the night of his death, he had phoned Cardinal Giovanni Colombo, archbishop of Milan, to ask his advice."

"This lead some monsignors in the Curia to whisper that the sheaf of papers found in Luciani's hand dealt with appointments and transfers—notes for reshaping the balance of power within the Church. Pope John Paul I's notes were never published. In keeping with the usual practice, Secretary of State Villot ordered the removal of every personal item belonging to the pontiff, including his glasses, his slippers, and above all the medicines of his night table. The examination by the pope's physician, Dr. Renato Buzzonetti, was thought by some to be slapdash, but it was used to draft a bulletin stating that John Paul I had died on the evening of September 28 of a heart attack (myocardial infarction). The pope's intimates, especially those most familiar with his mental and physical state, thought the real cause of death was probably a pulmonary embolism."

"A few hours after the announcement, rumors began circulating in Rome about the "mysteries" surrounding the death of Albino Luciani. The decision by Vatican authorities not to have an autopsy only inflated these suspicions and gave rise to the legend that the pope had been poisoned, . . ." His Holiness, pp. 151-152. Emphasis added.

"ANSA news service had claimed in a dispatch headlined VATICAN RUMORS on October 5, 1978, that, according to "indiscretions" inside the Vatican, Sister Vincenza had found the body at 4:30. Yallop maintained in his own book that in his personal interview with her, Sister Vincenza had confirmed the 4:30 timing." Night, p. 185.

"I asked her if Sister Vincenza had confided in her about the death of John Paul I."

"Yes," she said promptly. "You see, my sister was Vincenza's mother superior. I belong to another order, and I went on holiday up to Lamon in Veneto where she lived after she left Rome. I think she felt she could confide in me somehow because I wasn't in the same community."

"Can you tell me the details as she related them to you?"

"She told me that the evening the Pope died he went into the kitchen to say good-night to all the sisters. Then he said to Father Magee, 'Look, stay with them a bit longer, because they're always on their own.' Apparently Father Magee stayed up talking with them till about eleven, reading through the lives of the popes. Then went to bed."

"And the next day?"

"Around five-twenty Sister Vincenza left some coffee outside room. After five or ten minutes she went to check and found he hadn't taken it. So she thought he was resting a little longer. She went away again and came back later. She opened the door and saw the